

## DARIUS THE MEDE: AN UPDATE

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The two main historical problems which confront us in the sixth chapter of Daniel have to do with the two main historical figures in it, Darius the Mede, who was made king of Babylon, and Daniel, whom he appointed as principal governor there. The problem with Darius is that no ruler of Babylon is known from our historical sources by this name prior to the time of Darius I of Persia (522-486 B.C.). The problem with Daniel is that no governor of Babylon is known by that name, or by his Babylonian name, early in the Persian period. Daniel's position mentioned here, which has received little attention, will be discussed in a subsequent study. In the present article I shall treat the question of the identification of Darius the Mede, a matter which has received considerable attention, with a number of proposals having been advanced as to his identity. I shall endeavor to bring some clarity to the picture through a review of the cuneiform evidence and a comparison of that evidence with the biblical data. As a background, it will be useful also to have a brief overview of the various theories that have already been advanced.

### *1. The Biblical Data Regarding Darius the Mede*

Before we consider the theories regarding the identification of Darius the Mede, however, note should be taken of the information about him that is available from the book of Daniel. Aside from the description of the part he played in Daniel's fate as described in chap. 6, there are a number of vital bits of information about him scattered throughout the book.

It is stated in Dan 5:31 that he was about 62 years of age when he received the kingdom, and in 9:1 the kingdom which he received is identified as that of the Chaldeans. The first year of his reign is referred to twice, in 9:1 and 11:1, but no later regnal years are mentioned in the book. He apparently was succeeded by Cyrus

(10:1), for according to 11:1, in the third year of Cyrus the prophet looked back to the first year of Darius. He was the son of Ahasuerus and not only was referred to as a Mede but was said to have been of the "seed of the Medes" (9:1). From Dan 6:1-2 it is evident that he installed governors to administer the affairs of the kingdom after he received it.

Finally, as noted earlier, he became king over the realm of the Chaldeans. It is important to note that in 9:1 it is said that he was "made king" over this realm. The verb used here is in the Hophal or passive of the causative, which clearly implies the agency of someone else in appointing him to that office. Efforts to translate this verb as Hiphil have not been successful because of the absence of any object for the direct causative in this context.

## 2. *Theories Concerning Identification of Darius the Mede*

As far as theories concerning the identification of Darius the Mede are concerned, commentators on this matter divide into two main groups—those who hold that he was a historical figure, and those who hold that he was not. Adherents of the latter point of view generally consider the reference to Darius in Daniel to be a garbled and unhistorical form of references to Darius I Hystaspes, who ruled the Persian Empire from 522 to 486 B.C. The classical statement of this position can be found in H. H. Rowley's work.<sup>1</sup> Among those who hold that Daniel's Darius was a historical figure, he has been identified with two Median kings, Astyages and Cyaxares; two Persian kings, Cyrus and Cambyses; and two governors of Babylon early in the Persian period, Ugbaru and Gubaru. The strengths and weaknesses of each of these positions may be noted here.

Since it is evident that none of these individuals was named Darius as far as they are known to us from the historical sources available, it has been suggested in the case of each of them that the name of Darius in Daniel was a throne name used in Babylon. This suggestion has been drawn from analogy with the instances in which the Assyrian kings Tiglath-pileser III and Shalmaneser V held title to the kingdom of Babylon late in the eighth century and

<sup>1</sup>H. H. Rowley, *Darius the Mede and the Four World Empires in the Book of Daniel* (Cardiff, 1935).

were known by throne names there, Pulu (2 Kgs 15:29 and 1 Chr 5:26) and Ululaia, respectively. Whether or not Kandalanu was a Babylonian throne name for the Assyrian king Ashurbanipal has not yet been settled, but I think it probably was, since we now know that they both died in the same year. Thus, while the name Darius is considered to be a stumbling-block to identifying Darius with any of these figures by those who hold that he is not a historical figure, it is not considered to be an obstacle to any of these identifications by those who have advocated them. That moves the project of identification into the area of comparing details known about these figures from cuneiform and classical sources with the details known about Darius from Daniel.

### *Astyages*

Astyages is known from the Nabonidus Chronicle as the last king of Media whom Cyrus defeated when he brought that kingdom under his control in 550.<sup>2</sup> However, his father was Cyaxares I, not Ahasuerus, and the classical sources agree that he did not go to Babylon after he was defeated by Cyrus; consequently, this identification has received little attention in recent commentaries.

### *Cyaxares II*

The identification of Darius the Mede with Cyaxares II rests solely upon information obtained from Xenophon. Contrary to Herodotus and Ctesias, who wrote that Astyages had no male heir, Xenophon identified Cyaxares (II) as his son (*Cyropaedia* 1.5.2). Cyaxares II had no male heir either, according to Xenophon, so Cyrus became king of the Medes through marriage with his daughter, not through conquest (*Cyropaedia* 8.5.19). In this connection, therefore, Xenophon did not acknowledge Cyrus' conquest of Media in Astyages' time as described by the Nabonidus Chronicle. According to Xenophon, it was also Cyrus, not Cyaxares, who ruled Babylon after its conquest, although he set a palace in Babylon aside for Cyaxares' use whenever he visited there (*Cyropaedia* 8.5.17; 6.1ff.). Thus, while Xenophon added one more generation to the line of Median kings with Cyaxares II, he did not connect him with Babylon after its conquest.

<sup>2</sup>A. L. Oppenheim, "Babylonian and Assyrian Historical Texts," in *ANET*, p. 305.

As Rowley has pointed out in detail,<sup>3</sup> and as those who have identified Cyaxares II with Darius the Mede have acknowledged, there are numerous historical inaccuracies in Xenophon's account of these events. This, in conjunction with the fact that Cyaxares II is not known from any other classical or cuneiform source, makes it difficult to take seriously Xenophon's claim that Cyaxares II was the last independent king of Media, much less that he was Darius the Mede.

### Cyrus

The proposal that Darius the Mede may be another name for Cyrus is a recent addition to this field, having been first suggested in 1957 by D. J. Wiseman.<sup>4</sup> This proposal is derived from interpreting the *waw* in Dan 6:28 as explicative, "so Daniel prospered during the reign of Darius, even the reign of Cyrus the Persian." The classical writers indicate that Cyrus probably was the son of a Median mother, and the Harran inscriptions of Nabonidus refer to a king of the Medes at a time when Cyrus was the only person who could have occupied that position. It is possible that he was around 62 years of age when Babylon fell to his forces, and the economic texts from Babylonia written during his reign were dated by his years as "*king of Babylon, king of Lands.*" He is known to have installed vassal kings and subordinate governmental officers in several places, and "Ahasuerus" has been taken as a royal Iranian title rather than a personal name, since his father's name was Cambyses.

Some of the arguments drawn upon to support this theory seem a bit strained, and the old saw appears to be applicable here: It would seem strange to refer to Cyrus the Persian, who was the son of Cambyses, as Darius the Mede, who was the son of Ahasuerus.

Beyond that, this theory makes the dated references to these two kings in Daniel appear to be quite haphazard in arrangement, since it provides no explanation why Daniel would refer back from the third year of Cyrus, king of Persia (10:1), to the first year of

<sup>3</sup>Rowley, p. 41.

<sup>4</sup>D. J. Wiseman, "Some Historical Problems in the Book of Daniel," in *Notes on Some Problems in the Book of Daniel*, ed. D. J. Wiseman (London, 1965), p. 12.

Darius the Mede, who was king over the realm of the Chaldeans (11:1). To me, the logical sense of this order is that Cyrus had succeeded Darius by that time, not that Cyrus and Darius were one and the same individual. If biblical and extrabiblical texts from the ancient world are any indication, names, titles, and dates were not used in so haphazard a fashion.

### *Cambyses*

Several important points can be cited in favor of the theory identifying Darius the Mede with Cambyses. The classical statement of this theory is Charles Boutflower's presentation of it.<sup>5</sup> The dates and titles on some thirty cuneiform texts from Babylonia indicate that Cyrus installed his son Cambyses as his vassal king in Babylon for a year while he was still king of the Persian Empire. Furthermore, Cyrus did not carry the title "king of Babylon" in the datelines from the economic texts that were written in Babylonia during the first year after his conquest of that land. These two pieces of evidence have been taken to indicate that Cambyses, not Cyrus, was the king of Babylon for the first year after it fell to the Persians. In that respect, therefore, Cambyses would appear to fulfill a major historical requirement for consideration as Darius the Mede.

In other respects, however, he does not satisfy those requirements very well. He was not a Mede; his father was Cyrus, not Ahasuerus; and it is unlikely that he was 62 years of age when he came to the throne in Babylon. Of him it can also be said, therefore, that it seems unlikely that Cambyses the Persian, who was the son of Cyrus, should be identified with Darius the Mede, who was the son of Ahasuerus.

Although this theory does not appear to be correct, Boutflower has provided a valuable emphasis upon the relevance of the titularies from the contract tablets in the study of this problem. We will return to this proposed Cambyses identification later in this article when we give further attention to the titularies.

<sup>5</sup>Charles Boutflower, *In and Around the Book of Daniel*, reprinted ed. (Grand Rapids, Mich., 1963), pp. 142-155.

*Gubaru, Governor of Babylon*

The theory that the governor of Babylon named Gubaru was Darius the Mede was evidently first advanced by Babelon in 1881.<sup>6</sup> A number of commentators since that time have subscribed to this theory, and it has been given impetus recently by the monograph published by J. C. Whitcomb in support of it.<sup>7</sup> There was a Gubaru (or Ugbaru, as the name alternatively appears) who is identified in the Nabonidus Chronicle as the general in Cyrus' army who captured Babylon for him; and, according to the same source, he appointed governors there. On these two points, therefore, this Gubaru appears to fulfill the qualifications for Darius the Mede. He could have been quite elderly by that time, since he died soon after Babylon fell, and we know nothing significant about his parentage or his ethnic origin to contradict the idea that he could have been the son of a Median named Ahasuerus.

There is also a series of Babylonian texts dated from the 4th year of Cyrus to the 5th year of Cambyses which mentions Gubaru, the governor of Babylon. In the past, this Gubaru has been confused with the earlier Gubaru (Ugbaru) who conquered Babylon according to the Nabonidus Chronicle. That they could not have been the same individual is evident from the fact that the latter died soon after the fall of Babylon, well before the references to the former began to appear by Cyrus' 4th year.

It is to Whitcomb's credit that he has made a sharp distinction between these two individuals. Unfortunately, it appears to me, in so doing he selected the wrong Gubaru for Darius the Mede. There is no evidence that this later Gubaru was ever anything other than the governor of Babylon, while it is possible that the earlier Gubaru did hold a higher title, as I shall discuss below. In addition, this later Gubaru does not appear on the scene of action until after Darius the Mede passed off the scene, according to the dates connected with him and Cyrus in Daniel. Thus while Whitcomb has placed a welcome emphasis upon the distinction between these two individuals who had the same or similar names, the Gubaru who was later governor of Babylon does not fulfill any of the specific requirements for Darius the Mede in Daniel.

<sup>6</sup>Cf. Rowley, p. 19.

<sup>7</sup>J. C. Whitcomb, *Darius the Mede* (Grand Rapids, Mich., 1959).

### *Gubaru, the General Who Conquered Babylon*

The five theories reviewed thus far in this article all fail in certain important ways of providing a convincing identification for Darius the Mede. By a process of elimination, the list of candidates presented above has been narrowed down to one individual: Gubaru (Ugbaru), the general who conquered Babylon and served as its first Persian ruler. I have written on this subject previously in a series of articles published in *AUSS* from January, 1971, to July, 1972. My emphasis at that time was strictly upon the cuneiform evidence relating to the possibility that someone other than Cyrus ruled Babylon as its king during the first year after its conquest by the Persians. I would like to take this opportunity to put my findings into a more biblical context. In so doing, there are many details presented in those earlier studies that must be left out here. Readers who desire more complete information on the materials that underlie the presentation here are referred to my earlier work on this subject, where such matters are treated in greater detail.

### *3. Evidence from the Titularies and the Coregency of Cyrus and Cambyses*

The first of those four studies in *AUSS* contains a discussion of the different titularies utilized in dating economic documents in Babylonia from the eighth through the fifth centuries.<sup>8</sup> The purpose of that study was to point out that the changes that took place in those titularies followed a pattern which was consistent, distinctive, and at times politically significant.

#### *Three Stages of Development in the Titularies*

For our purposes here we may simply note briefly the stages in development of the titularies of the Babylonian kings. The standard titulary used in essentially all of the documents dated to the Neo-Babylonian kings from Nabopolassar to Nabonidus was simply "king of Babylon." With the Persian period, a change took place, the title "king of Lands" being added to "king of Babylon." The standard titulary employed in Babylonia for the Persian kings from

<sup>8</sup>W. H. Shea, "An Unrecognized Vassal King of Babylon in the Early Achaemenid Period, I," *AUSS* 9 (1971): 52-67.

Cyrus to Darius I was "king of Babylon, king of Lands." There are some antecedents to the use of the title "king of Lands," but they need not be discussed here. Xerxes finally dropped the designation "king of Babylon" from his titulary because of the rebellion in Babylon, so the standard titulary employed for the Persian kings in Babylon from Xerxes to Alexander was simply "king of Lands."

Thus, the titularies used in the datelines of economic documents written in Babylonia during the period with which we are concerned went through three stages of development: (1) for Neo-Babylonian kings, "king of Babylon"; (2) for early Persian kings, "king of Babylon, king of Lands"; and (3) for later Persian kings, "king of Lands." There is but one significant exception to this pattern, and that is the title employed for Cyrus during his accession year and first year of rule over Babylonia. In contrast to the Neo-Babylonian kings who ruled Babylonia before him, it is clear from the contract tablet evidence that Cyrus *did not* take up the title "king of Babylon" during his accession year and most of his first year of rule there. Only late in his first year was "king of Babylon" added to "king of Lands" in titularies of tablets dated to Cyrus so as to make up the full titulary of the early Persian period.<sup>9</sup>

### *The Transition in the Titulary of Cyrus*

This transition in the titulary of Cyrus, as documented by the contract tablets, is statistically significant and not due just to scribal variants. The pattern is clear. During the last four months of his accession year and the first ten months of his first year of rule over Babylonia, Cyrus carried only the title "king of Lands" and did not carry the additional title "king of Babylon" in the economic documents written there. This much is clear from the available contract tablets, and it is very unlikely that the publication of any number of new tablets from this period will change that picture. As far as I can see, there is only one logical explanation for this phenomenon: Cyrus was not the official king of Babylon during the first fourteen months of Persian control there.

If Cyrus was not the king of Babylon during these fourteen months, then there are only two possible explanations for this political situation. Either there was an interregnum, during which

<sup>9</sup>W. H. Shea, "An Unrecognized Vassal King, II," *AUSS* 9 (1971):107-112.



the throne of Babylon was not occupied or someone else was king. An interregnum seems very unlikely here, since kings ruled Babylon down to its conquest by the Persians, since Cyrus himself took up the title to that throne fourteen months later, and since installing a king in Babylon would have been the most obvious method to use in organizing the new government of Babylon. For these reasons, the most likely explanation for the situation involved here is that there was a king in Babylon who ruled there as a vassal to Cyrus for this fourteen-month period.

In other words, contrary to what has been written in some commentaries, there is room in history for Darius the Mede. Moreover, the length of his reign as king of Babylon is sharply delimited by the dates on these contract tablets. It might also be noted that this period of time fits very well with the length of the reign of Darius the Mede in the book of Daniel, since his first year is the only one mentioned there (9:1; 11:1) and since he had passed off the scene of action by Cyrus' third year (10:1).

#### *A Cyrus-Cambyses Coregency at the Beginning of Cyrus' Reign?*

The question that arises from these observations is, Who occupied the throne of Babylon during this period of time? Older interpreters suggested that Cambyses reigned in Babylon at this time because of the titles in some economic documents which indicate he ruled Babylon for a year as vassal to his father Cyrus. The data involved include the dates and titles from twenty-nine texts that fall into two groups. The first group of nine texts are dated to year 1 of "Cambyses, king of Babylon, Cyrus, king of Lands."<sup>10</sup> The second group of texts includes twenty that are all dated to year 1 of "Cambyses, king of Babylon" without the customary additional title "king of Lands" used throughout his reign. It is possible that some of these titles could be scribal variants in texts that belong to the first regular regnal year of Cambyses, but it is not statistically possible that all of them could be. It is clear, then, that as a group, these texts belong to a special circumstance, i.e., the coregency pointed out by the other nine texts with the more specific titulary.

<sup>10</sup>Ibid., p. 101.

The important question about this coregency is, During which of Cyrus' nine years of rule over Babylonia did Cambyses serve as his vassal king there? The older view of this matter is that he served in that capacity during Cyrus' first year, 538/537.

This view was based essentially upon the pragmatic test of fitting the titles from the coregency tablets, in which Cambyses was identified as the king of Babylon, into the gap in Cyrus' early titulary when the latter was not identified as the king of Babylon. There are some difficulties with this view, however, as it does not explain the unusual course of Cambyses' career, or why Cyrus removed Cambyses from the kingship of Babylon after just one year's reign.

#### *A Cyrus-Cambyses Coregency at the End of Cyrus' Reign?*

In view of the difficulties with the foregoing interpretation, W. H. Dubberstein proposed that Cyrus installed Cambyses as king in Babylon at the end of his reign, not at the beginning.<sup>11</sup> This view posits a more normal course for Cambyses' career, and specific support for it was drawn from the title on a contract tablet which read, "year 1, accession year, Cambyses king of Babylon and Lands."<sup>12</sup> Since Cambyses' accession year referred to in this case must have occurred in 530/529, year 1 at the beginning of this dateline must have occurred in that year also. What other circumstance could that "year 1" have referred to besides Cambyses' coregency with his father? Since all of the coregency tablets are dated to year 1, the connection seems obvious, and such a connection would date Cambyses' coregency at the end of Cyrus' reign.

In support of this proposal of Dubberstein, attention can be called to parallels from the datelines of three contract tablets which come from the accession year of Darius II: (1) "4th month, day 25, 41st year, accession year, Darius, king of Lands." (2) "41st year, accession year, 12th month, day 14, Darius, king of Lands," and (3) "41st year, accession year, 12th month, day 20, Darius, king of

<sup>11</sup>W. H. Dubberstein, "The Chronology of Cyrus and Cambyses," *AJSL* 55 (1938): 417-419.

<sup>12</sup>O. Krückmann, *Neubabylonische Rechts- und Verwaltungstexte* (Leipzig, 1933), No. 92.

Lands."<sup>13</sup> These dates obviously refer to the 41st and last year of Artaxerxes I which preceded (in the same calendar year) the accession period of Darius II. Applying the principle of these parallels to the text from Cambyses' accession year referred to above makes it evident that the year 1 in this case should be located in the same year as, but prior to, the accession period of Cambyses. The accession year of Cambyses, however, fell in the same calendar year as the ninth year of Cyrus; therefore, year 1 of this text must refer to some other situation, i.e. the coregency between Cyrus and Cambyses. Thus, the parallels from the three accession-year texts of Darius II provide some additional support for interpreting the date formula of this text in such a way as to locate the coregency of Cambyses at the *end* of Cyrus' reign.

#### *A Cyrus-Cambyses Coregency Early in Cyrus' Reign?*

The matter did not rest with Dubberstein's proposal, however, as M. San Nicolò soon supplied an additional piece of evidence bearing upon the date of the coregency between Cyrus and Cambyses.<sup>14</sup> In his study of Neo-Babylonian texts, San Nicolò pointed out that the name of an official from Sippar that appears in one of the coregency texts disappears from the other business documents by the end of the 7th year of Cyrus, and another person appears in his place early in the 8th year. On this basis, it has been suggested that the coregency between Cyrus and Cambyses could not have occurred any later than the 7th year of Cyrus, and it may have occurred earlier than that. This suggestion is, of course, incompatible with Dubberstein's proposal to date the coregency at the end of Cyrus' reign.

Herein lies a problem which is as yet unsolved. On the one hand, there is the evidence from the dateline of the text published by O. Krückmann which cannot, to my knowledge at present, be explained in any other way than as referring to the coregency between Cyrus and Cambyses which should be dated in Cyrus' 9th

<sup>13</sup>R. A. Parker and W. H. Dubberstein, *Babylonian Chronology 626 B.C.-A.D. 75* (Providence, R. I., 1956), p. 18.

<sup>14</sup>M. San Nicolò, *Beiträge zu einer Prosopographie neubabylonischer Beamten der Zivil- und Tempelverwaltung* (Munich, 1941), pp. 51-53.

year. Such a location for this arrangement also provides a clearcut explanation why no coregency texts are dated to Cambyses' year 2 or later, since Cyrus did not live beyond year 1 of such a coregency. On the other hand, any reason for concluding an earlier coregency remains obscure. Moreover, the evidence from the transition in position between these two officials earlier in Cyrus' reign cannot be harmonized with a date for this coregency so late in Cyrus' reign as the dateline of Krückmann's text appears to indicate.

If this coregency did occur in Cyrus' last year, as Dubberstein has proposed, then my discussion below continues undisturbed by that fact. If this coregency occurred earlier than that, I would suggest that it occurred in Cyrus' 2d year, not his 1st, because of the chronology of the events narrated in the Nabonidus Chronicle, where Cambyses' participation in the Babylonian New Year's festival is placed at the beginning of Cyrus' 2d regnal year. The description of Cambyses' activities on that occasion is tantamount to designating him as king then, and this is the only event known from Cyrus' reign with which such a period of kingship can be connected. In either case—whether the coregency was at the end of Cyrus' reign, or whether it began in Cyrus' 2d year—, Cambyses does not fit the data given in the book of Daniel regarding Darius the Mede.

#### 4. *The Chronological Data of the Nabonidus Chronicle: Are They Retrospective or Consecutive?*

One of the arguments against identifying Darius the Mede with the general Gubaru of the Nabonidus Chronicle has been that he did not live long enough after the fall of Babylon to conduct its affairs as required by the references to him in Daniel.<sup>15</sup> This argument rests upon a particular interpretation of the order of the dated events in column III of the Chronicle, which records that Gubaru died on the night of the 11th of Arahsamnu, the eighth month of the year.<sup>16</sup> Since Babylon fell to the Persians on the 16th of Tishri and Cyrus entered the city on the 3d of Arahsamnu, the standard interpretation of the order of these events has been that

<sup>15</sup>Rowley, p. 24; Whitcomb, p. 22.

<sup>16</sup>ANET, p. 306.

Gubaru died about three weeks after the fall of Babylon. He could not, therefore, have been Darius the Mede.

This particular interpretation, however, rests upon taking the events narrated in the Chronicle out of order, for the period from Kislimu to Adar, during which time the gods were returned to their cities, intervenes between Cyrus' entry into Babylon on 3 Arah-samnu and Gubaru's death on 11 Arah-samnu. There are two possibilities here: (1) that the events of the Chronicle should be taken in consecutive order, in which case Gubaru died a year and three weeks after Babylon fell, or (2) that the events of the Chronicle should be taken in retrospective order, in which case Gubaru died three weeks after Babylon fell.<sup>17</sup>

The question then is, Which of these two views is correct? According to which chronology should these events in the Chronicle be interpreted?

In searching for comparative materials with which to answer this question, I surveyed the dated events in all ten known texts of the Babylonian Chronicle, which cover events from the time of Nabonassar in the eighth century B.C. to the Nabonidus Chronicle. The latter, of course, records events in the sixth century.<sup>18</sup> I found that of the 318 chronological observations recorded in these ten texts, 313 are in consecutive order according to the dated events which precede or follow them, whereas only five dated events in the chronicles do not appear in consecutive order. These five exceptions are discussed in detail in my previous study of this subject.<sup>19</sup> Since it is obvious that the consecutive chronological order of the text was the standard rule in these chronicles, it seems reasonable to apply that rule to the events in column III of the Nabonidus Chronicle.

There is a distinct difference between the retrospective and the consecutive interpretation of these events. The problem is not just the difference between two equally reasonable alternative interpretations, for in the retrospective view of the text, a scribal error must definitely be posited, since the date for Gubaru's death does not overlap with any other dates in column III. On this basis, it must

<sup>17</sup>Shea, "An Unrecognized Vassal King, III," *AUSS* 10 (1972): 100.

<sup>18</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 102.

<sup>19</sup>*Ibid.*, pp. 102-108.

be assumed that the scribe located Gubaru's death in the wrong place in the text. The reliability of the chronicles as historical sources has been commented upon by various observers.<sup>20</sup> As far as can be determined by this investigation, therefore, it is not only unwise but unwarranted to assume that the text in column III of the Nabonidus Chronicle is in error and that the dated events there are out of order.

There is another aspect to the text of the third column of the Nabonidus Chronicle that is relevant to the discussion of the chronological order of the events recorded there. This particular feature of the text is the manner in which the dates were written in this passage. Month names are missing from five of these dates, the event referred to being dated only by a day number. In all five cases, that day happened to fall in the month that had been last mentioned previously in the text. The first three cases of this come from the month of Tishri at the beginning of the passage that is pertinent to this study. After the initial statement there of Cyrus' attack on the army of Akkad at Opis, the dates that follow in the text are simply "day 14" (1.14), "day 16" (1.15), and "the end of the month" (1.16). Obviously, these three dates continue to refer to the month of Tishri mentioned earlier in line 12, since the next dated event in the text is Cyrus' entry into Babylon on the 3d of Arahsamnu.

The same phenomenon occurs at the end of this section. There the date when Cambyses entered the temple is simply given as "day 4." Again, this clearly refers to the month last mentioned in the text. The date in the last phrase of the preceding line is the 3d of Nisanu, on which the mourning for the king's wife ended, so this places Cambyses' entry into the temple on the 4th of Nisanu, during the New Year's festival.

Had the death of Gubaru occurred on the 11th day of the very same month of Arahsamnu that Cyrus entered Babylon, the record of his death should have followed that reference in the text, and the scribe, according to his custom, should have dated it simply to

<sup>20</sup>D. J. Wiseman, *Chronicles of Chaldean Kings (626-556 B.C.) in the British Museum* (London, 1956), p. 1; W. F. Albright, "The Nebuchadnezzar and Neriglissar Chronicles," *BASOR*, no. 143 (1956), p. 28; A. R. Millard, "Another Babylonian Chronicle Text," *Iraq* 26 (1964):22.

“day 11” without mentioning the month again. In such case, the account should have read, “in the month of Arahsamnu, the 3d day, Cyrus entered Babylon, . . . on the night of the 11th day, Gubaru died.” Since this is not the case, the death of Gubaru should be dated in a different Arahsamnu, i.e., a year later.

In view of the foregoing considerations, the *consecutive* view of the order of the events in column III of the Nabonidus Chronicle has been adopted in this study. It seems to be the most reasonable interpretation of the evidence currently available on the subject. And it merits notice again that the consecutive view places Gubaru's death *a year and three weeks after the fall of Babylon*, rather than just three weeks after that event.

#### 5. *Gubaru and the Combined Evidence of the Titularies and the Chronicle*

Two of the major pieces of evidence relevant to the quest for Darius the Mede have been examined above—the titles from the contract tablets, and the order of the events in the Nabonidus Chronicle. It remains to bring these two pieces of evidence together.

#### *Change in Cyrus' Titulary*

When these two lines of evidence are brought together, the point of greatest importance for the present study is that the change in Cyrus' titulary in the economic texts, which formerly went unexplained, can now be connected with a dated historical event from the Nabonidus Chronicle—namely, the death of Gubaru. This correlation of data, utilizing the consecutive interpretation of the chronological data, indicates that the title “king of Babylon” was added to the titulary of Cyrus sometime during the 10th month—six weeks or so after the death of Gubaru on the 11th day of the 8th month in the year 538 B.C.

Since these two events are closely connected chronologically, it follows that they may have been related as cause and effect. If Cyrus took up the title “king of Babylon” and became the official king there shortly after Gubaru died, it seems reasonable to surmise that Gubaru may have held title to that office before him up to the time of his death. If this assumption is correct, then identification has been made of the king who was Cyrus' vassal in Babylon during the time Cyrus carried the suzerain's title of “king of Lands” rather

than "king of Babylon, king of Lands" in the texts written in Babylon. The time lag involved is about what one would expect for the news of Gubaru's death to reach Cyrus and for the latter's instructions of what to do with the kingship of Babylon to reach there in return.

### *Other Lines of Evidence*

Other less prominent lines of evidence might also be cited in support of the hypothesis that Gubaru reigned as king of Babylon, vassal to Cyrus during the interval specified above. It is of interest in this connection that he is mentioned by name in the Nabonidus Chronicle. This fact already puts him in a category with royalty, since there are fifty-eight kings mentioned by name 177 times in the ten Babylonian Chronicle texts referred to above, while only seven persons mentioned by name in the chronicles were not kings.<sup>21</sup> The same point is reinforced by the fact that Gubaru's death date is furnished. Of the twenty-two individuals for whom death dates are available from the chronicles, twenty were kings or queens while only two were non-royal persons.<sup>22</sup> Both of these factors put Gubaru in a class with royalty, although they do not specifically indicate that he had to be a king.

The mention of Gubaru's death in the Nabonidus Chronicle indicates, in all probability, that he was still resident in Babylonia when he died. Since he conquered Babylon for Cyrus and appointed governors there afterwards, it is also likely that he continued to play a prominent part in the political affairs of Babylon until his death a year after he conquered it. The question is, What position did he hold when playing his part in those affairs?

The notice of the death of the wife of the king in the Nabonidus Chronicle immediately after the record of Gubaru's death may be significant here. To which *king* was this woman married? There are five possibilities: Nabonidus, Belshazzar, Cyrus, Cambyses, and Gubaru. That a mourning would have been performed for the wife of Nabonidus after he had been deposed and when he was an unpopular king seems unlikely. It seems even more unlikely that this woman would have been Belshazzar's wife.

<sup>21</sup>W. H. Shea, "An Unrecognized Vassal King, IV," *AUSS* 10 (1972):148.

<sup>22</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 153.



If she were Cyrus' wife, he does not appear to have taken much interest in her, since he did not attend the mourning held in her honor. If Cambyses' participation in the New Year festival following the mourning for her is an indication of his elevation to kingship, as noted earlier, then he had not yet become king by the time she died. Of these five possibilities, therefore, the most likely among them is that she was Gubaru's wife, in which case her title indicates that he was indeed king when he died.

### *The Problem of Gubaru's Name*

Mention should be made of the problem connected with Gubaru's name, since there has been some confusion over just what his name was. This confusion has arisen because the first sign in his name differs in the three lines of the Nabonidus Chronicle in which it was written. In line 15 of column III of the Chronicle, the first sign in his name was written defectively so that it is not clear what value it was intended to represent.<sup>23</sup> The first sign of the name written in line 20 is *Gu/qu/ku*, and the first sign of the name written in line 22 is *Ug/uq/uk*. In my opinion, all three of these names refer to the same individual, and his proper name probably was Gubaru. In my former study of this subject, I referred to him as Ugbaru in order to avoid confusion with the later governor Gubaru, from whom this Gubaru is to be distinguished. The Greek form of the name of the general who conquered Babylon for Cyrus, according to Xenophon, was Gobryas.

### 6. *Gubaru and Darius the Mede of Daniel*

How well does the description of Gubaru arrived at above compare with the description of Darius the Mede in Daniel? There are at least six points on which the cuneiform and biblical descriptions of these two individuals agree. There are also a few points mentioned in Daniel concerning which we have as yet no evidence one way or the other from the cuneiform records.

#### *Six Points of Correlation*

The six points of agreement may be listed as follows:

<sup>23</sup>Sidney Smith, *Babylonian Historical Texts Relating to the Capture and Downfall of Babylon* (London, 1924), p. 121.

First, according to the Nabonidus Chronicle, Gubaru led the division of Medo-Persian troops that conquered Babylon. The same may be inferred for Darius in Dan 5:28.

Second, Gubaru installed governors in Babylon, according to the Chronicle. This is precisely what Dan 6:1-2 states that Darius the Mede did.

Third, although Gubaru's age is not specifically stated in the Chronicle, one might infer that he was already elderly from the fact that he died soon after Babylon was conquered. This would harmonize with the indication that Darius was 62 years of age, mentioned in Dan 5:31.

Fourth, according to the chronology of the Chronicle and the contract-tablet titles adopted above, Gubaru died about a year after he conquered Babylon. This would fit well with his first year of reign that is mentioned in Dan 9:1 and 11:1. The most logical explanation for the transition to the third year of Cyrus in Dan 10:1 is that Darius the Mede had passed off the scene of action by that time. His death about a year after Babylon fell provides the best explanation for his passing off the scene of action.

Fifth, the distinction between the kingdoms of Cyrus and Darius correlates well with this situation. Dan 10:1 refers to Cyrus as the king of Persia, which fits well with his title of "king of Lands" in the contract tablets. Darius the Mede, on the other hand, ruled over the "realm of the Chaldeans," which agrees well with the title "king of Babylon" that Cyrus did not take up until late in his first year of rule over Babylonia, according to the contract tablets.

Sixth, Gubaru's position as vassal harmonizes with the statement that he was "made king" over the realm, since the suzerain who made him king at that time must have been Cyrus.

### *Points on Which Cuneiform Evidence is Lacking*

Aside from the difference between the names of Gubaru and Darius, which may be taken tentatively at present as the difference between the individual's personal name and throne name in Babylon, as discussed above, only two items noted in Daniel regarding Darius the Mede cannot be correlated with available cuneiform records:

First, concerning Gubaru's parentage we know nothing from cuneiform sources, and the classical sources are also silent on this matter. Thus, we have no way to determine whether or not his father was named Ahasuerus, the name given him by Daniel.

Second, although the cuneiform sources are silent also about Gubaru's ethnic origin, Xenophon refers to the general Gobryas who conquered Babylon for Cyrus as an "Assyrian," by which he usually meant Babylonian. If this designation were accurate, it would indicate that Gubaru was not a Mede, but there are so many historical inaccuracies in Xenophon's account of these events that this designation need not be taken seriously. The fact that the Nabonidus Chronicle referred to him as the governor of Gutium before he conquered Babylon could be compatible with Median ancestry, but we have no way of determining this at present.

### *Summary and Conclusion*

In summary, six of the points of identification about Darius the Mede in Daniel have been checked above with references to Gubaru from cuneiform sources and have been found compatible. Two points—his parentage and ethnic origin—cannot be checked as yet for lack of adequate historical documentation.

Our documentation for Gubaru also falls short of identifying him as the king of Babylon or calling him Darius, but the former point is compatible with the indirect evidence from the contract-tablet titles of this time, and the latter point is compatible with a known practice in Babylon.